

Message Text

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INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 USIE-00 INRE-00
CIAE-00 PM-05 INR-07 L-03 ACDA-12 NSAE-00 PA-01
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O P 271715Z JAN 78
FM AMEMBASSY OSLO
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 5164
AMEMBASSY BONN IMMEDIATE
USMISSION USNATO PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW ROUTINE
INFO SECDEF WASHDC
USCINCEUR VAIHINGEN GE
USNMR SHAPE
AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN
AMEMBASSY HELSINKI
AMEMBASSY REYKJAVIK
AMEMBASSY STOCKHOLM

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 OSLO 0492

SHAPE FOR POLADS

USNATO FOR MR. PENDLETON

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: MILI, GW, NO, UR, FI
SUBJ: FRG PARTICIPATION IN NATO EXERCISES IN NORWAY: STAUNCHING
THE THE FLOW

(A) USNATO 00851, (B) OSLO 0364

1. UPDATE: DURING THE LAST SEVEN DAYS BOTH MINISTER OF DEFENSE
HANSEN AND HIS DEPUTY JOHAN JORGEN HOLST AND OTHERS HAVE
BEEN THREATENED TO HEAVY PRESS AND POLITICAL CRITICISM FOR THE
GON'S DECISION TO PLACE A 480 MAN LIMIT ON FRG PARTICIPATION
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IN NATO EXERCISES IN NORWAY (REF). TWO POINTS OF DETAIL
CONCERNING THE DECISION HAVE BEEN GIVEN PARTICULAR ATTENTION
DURING THE PAST WEEK:

--- DID THE GOVERNMENT OR MORE SPECIFICALLY
MINISTER OF DEFENSE HANSEN EARLIER PLEDGE OR STATE THAT
THE "NORMALIZATION" PROCESS WOULD LEAD ULTIMATELY TO THE

PARTICIPATION OF THE FULL 1,500 MAN FRG CONTINGENT IN THE 1980
ACE MOBILE FORCE EXERCISE IN NORWAY
(THUS IMPLYING A PRESENT RETREAT)

--- AND WHEN WAS THE DECISION TO CURTAIL FRG
PARTICIPATION MADE? (I.E., BEFORE OR AFTER KOSYGIN'S HELSINKI
DIATRIBE AND ZIMSKOV'S VISIT)
THE LARGER POINT, OF COURSE, IS WHETHER THE NORWEGIANS
"CAVED" TO THE SOVIETS.

2. HOLST, IN A NATIONALLY-TELEVISED INTERVIEW JAN 23,
SUMMARIZED THE LINE THAT THE GOVERNMENT HAS BEEN TAKING ON
THE SUBJECT SINCE IT AROSE TWO WEEKS AGO. HE MAINTAINS THAT
THE DECISION TO LIMIT WEST GERMAN PARTICIPATION IN THIS YEAR'S
NATO EXERCISE TO 480 MEN WAS REACHED LONG AGO (EMBASSY HAS
BEEN INFORMED THAT IT WAS TAKEN AT A CABINET SECURITY
COMMITTEE MEETING IN OCTOBER) AND THAT THIS DECISION WAS PART
OF A LONG-TERM NORMALIZATION PROCESS WITH WEST GERMANY WHICH
CONSIDERS THE SYMBOLIC FACT OF GERMAN PARTICIPATION AT WHATEVER
LEVEL TO BE THE SIGNIFICANT FACTOR. HOLST AND OTHERS HAVE EMPHASIZED
THAT THE NUMBERS OF GERMANS ARE MILITARILY UNIMPORTANT. HE STATE
THAT THE SUBJECT OF GERMAN PARTICIPATION WAS DISCUSSED DURING
THE DEC VISIT
OF SOVIET DEPUTY FOREIGN MINISTER ZIMSKOV. HOWEVER, THE
NORWEGIAN DETERMINATION WAS MADE EARLIER AND WAS NOT THE RESULT OF
SOVIET PRESSURES. HOLST SAID.
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3. WHAT REALY HAPPENED, WHO KNOW BUT ---
OUR READING OF THE SEQUENCE OF EVENTS AS THEY OCCURRED
IS AS FOLLOWS: A DECISION WAS REACHED BY THE MINISTRY
OF DEFENSE LAST FALL DURING ITS ANNUAL REVIEW OF THE LEVEL
OF GERMAN PARTICIPATION IN NATO MANEUVERS THAT THE NUMBERS
OF GERMANS TAKING PART IS MILITARILY IRRELEVANT, AND THAT,
THEREFORE, AS A SOP TO FINLAND AND THE SOVIET UNION, THE
NUMBERS PARTICIPATING IN THE 1978 EXERCISE (480) COULD SERVE AS
A PLATEAU. THE NATIONAL SECURITY COMMITTEE OF THE CABINET
CONFIRMED THE MINISTRY'S DECISION IN OCTOBER BUT DECIDED
NOT TO MAKE IT PUBLIC UNTIL A MORE APPROPRIATE TIME ARRIVED.

4. IT WAS SUBSEQUENTLY DECIDED THAT THE APPROPRIATE OCCASION
WOULD BE THE DEFENSE MINISTER'S ANNUAL ADDRESS TO THE OSLO
MILITARY SOCIETY. NO FURTHER POLITICAL REFLECTION WAS GIVEN
TO THE MATTER (WE BELIEVE THE MFA WAS NOT EVEN CONSULTED,
MUCH LESS NATO) SO THAT EVENTS SUCH AS THE KOSYGIN OUTBURST AND
THE ZIMSKOV VISIT WERE NOT
TAKEN INTO CONSIDERATION. MINISTER HANSEN DELIVERED HIS
JAN 9 ADDRESS INCLUDING THE STATEMENT EMPLOYING A LIMIT ON
GERMAN PARTICIPATION. THERE IS VIRTUAL UNANIMOUS AGREEMENT IN
OSLO NOW THAT THE ENTIRE AFFAIR WAS BUNGLED--THAT THE TIMING

COULD NOT HAVE BEEN WORSE AND THAT CONSULTATIONS WITH THE ALLIANCE AND INDIVIDUALLY WITH THE GERMANS SHOULD HAVE BEEN HELD BEFORE THE DECISION WAS FINALIZED.

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5. PERCEPTIONS NOT FACTS: DESPITE WHAT THE FACTS OF THE STORY MAY OR MAY NOT TURN OUT TO BE, IT IS OUR VIEW, WHICH WE HAVE ALREADY COMMUNICATED TO VARIOUS SENIOR MEMBERS OF THE FOREIGN MINISTRY, THAT WHILE WE FIND NO FAULT WITH THE NORWEGIAN CONCLUSION THAT THE SIZE OF GERMAN PARTICIPATION IS MILITARILY UNIMPORTANT, WE DO FEEL STRONGLY THAT THE APPEARANCE OF NORWAY ACCEDING TO SOVIET WISHES, WHETHER IT DID OR DID NOT, IS POLITICALLY VERY IMPORTANT. UNFORTUNATELY, ONE IS LEFT WITH THE IMPRESSION THAT THE RUSSIANS HAVE SUCCEEDED IN LIMITING NORWEGIAN PARTICIPATION IN NATO. THAT CONCLUSION MUST BE INESCAPABLE IN MOSCOW.
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6. WHAT IS TO BE DONE? WE AGREE WITH USNATO'S EVALUATION THAT THE NORWEGIANS SHOULD HAVE IMPRESSED UPON THEM THE FACT THAT A DECISION OF THIS KIND SHOULD HAVE BEEN TAKEN ONLY AFTER THE CLOSEST CONSULTATION WITH NATO. HOWEVER, IN ORDER TO PROTECT MINISTER HANSEN, A GOOD FRIEND OF THE EMBASSY'S AND OF THE ALLIANCE, AND TO AVOID THE PUBLIC APPEARANCE OF THE ALLIES GANGING UP ON NORWAY (TO THE SOVIETS DELIGHT) WE DO NOT FEEL THAT THE CRITICISM OR FURTHER DISCUSSION SHOULD TAKE PLACE PUBLICLY. HOWEVER, WE DO THINK THAT THESE POINTS SHOULD BE PURSUED VIGOROUSLY WITH THE NORWEGIANS PRIVATELY IN WHATEVER NATO FORUM THE MISSION JUDGES BEST SUITED TO THE TASK. WE WOULD ADD TWO FURTHER TALKING POINTS TO THE THREE MADE IN USNATO'S 851. WE WOULD STRESS THAT THE NORWEGIAN DECISION TO LIMIT GERMAN PARTICIPATION HAS SERVED TO GIVEN EVEN GREATER IMPORTANCE TO THE FUTURE POSITIONS THE GON TAKES ON OTHER MILITARILY MORE VITAL ALLIANCE-RELATED MATTERS SUCH AS PREPOSITIONING. HAVING GIVEN THE POSSIBLE IMPRESSION OF WEAKNESS, IT IS NOW NECESSARY THAT THE NORWEGIANS INDICATE UNEQUIVOCALLY THEIR CONTINUED STRONG SUPPORT FOR THE ALLIANCE AND ITS PROJECTS. WE ALSO CONTINUE TO HOPE THAT THE GERMAN DECISION HAS NOT BEEN FINALLY CLOSED AND CAN BE REOPENED AT SOME FUTURE TIME.

7 FOR BONN: WE WOULD BE INTERESTED IN THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND PRESS REACTION AND ANY BACKGROUND YOU COULD PROVIDE ON FRG/GON DISCUSSIONS OF THE SUBJECT.
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